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## Influences of Victorian Values on Japanese Versions of Grimms' Fairy Tales\*

**Abstract:** Grimms' Fairy Tales were first introduced in Japan through English textbooks. Likewise, the first Japanese translation in book form by Ryoho Suga was not translated from the German original, but from H.B. Paull's English translation which contains many changes in line with Victorian values. By introducing German writings via English translations, influences of English culture and society were unavoidable.

**Résumé:** Au Japon, les contes des frères Grimm ont été introduits par des manuels anglais. La première traduction japonaise en forme de livre par Ryoho Suga n'a également pas été faite à partir du texte allemand, sinon à partir de la traduction anglaise par H.B. Paull qui contient beaucoup de modifications en rapport avec les valeurs de l'âge victorien. En présentant la culture allemande à travers une traduction anglaise, l'influence de la culture et de la société anglaises étaient inévitables.

**Zusammenfassung:** Die Grimmschen Märchen wurden in Japan erstmals durch englische Schulbücher eingeführt. Die erste japanische Übersetzung in Buchform von Ryoho Suga entstand ebenfalls nicht nach dem deutschen Original, sondern nach der englischen Übersetzung von H.B. Paull und ist daher dem Zeitgeist der viktorianischen Epoche verpflichtet. Soweit deutsche Dichtungen über englische Übersetzungen übernommen wurden, zeigen sie unvermeidlich Einflüsse aus der englischen Kultur und Gesellschaft.

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### Introduction

Early Japanese versions of Grimms' Fairy Tales were not translated directly from the German original, but from English sources which, however, were not quoted by the Japanese translators. Many of the changes found in Japanese renderings

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of the Grimm tales were mostly brought about by these English translations. The purpose of this article is to show the Victorian values found in Japanese versions drawing upon English translations.

## 1. The Introduction and Reception of Grimms' Fairy Tales through English Textbooks in Japan

The first Grimm tale introduced in Japan was *The Horse-Shoe Nail* (KHM 184), included in *Sargent's Standard Third Reader* (1870)<sup>1</sup> and subsequently translated from English into Japanese by Toan Matsuyama (April 1873) and Motoi Fukamauchi (September 1873)<sup>2</sup>.

It was followed by *Hans in Luck* (KHM 83) in *Chambers' Standard Reading Books 2* (1873)<sup>3</sup>. This English textbook was not translated into Japanese, but was only used at elite schools and was therefore not popularized<sup>4</sup>.

The third Grimm tale introduced in Japan was *The Fox and the Cat* (KHM 75) in *Swinton's Third Reader*<sup>5</sup>. This English textbook, with notes on vocabulary and grammar by Masakage Fujii, was published in Tokyo in 1887 and also translated from English into Japanese by Eigo kyoiku kenkyu kai (The working group on English teaching methods) in 1888.

### 1.1. *The Horse-Shoe Nail* (KHM 184) in *Sargent's Standard Third Readers*

Epes Sargent (1813–80) included *The Horse-Shoe Nail* in his *Standard Third Readers* textbooks for elementary schools, but did not cite the source of this tale.

<sup>1</sup> Genichro Fukawa: Andersen dowo to Grimm dowo no honpo hatsuyaku wo megutte (About the First Japanese Translation of Andersen's Fairy Tales and Grimm's Fairy Tales). In: *Bungaku* 9,4 (2008) 141. According to Fukawa the year of publication was 1868, but I found the book published in Boston, by John L. Shorey in 1870 (the first edition that appeared abroad dates from 1859).

<sup>2</sup> Fukawa (above, note 1) 141–151.

<sup>3</sup> Chambers, William and Robert: *Standard Third Reading Books*. Osaka Hobunkan 1888 (the first edition used abroad appeared in London in 1863); Michiaki Kawato: *Meijiki no Cinderella to Akazukin* (Cinderella and Little Red Riding Hood in the Meiji Era). eds. id./Takanori Sakakibara. In: *Jido bungaku honyaku sakuhin souran* (All the Documents of the Translations of Children's Literature) 3. Tokyo: Nada Shuppan Center 2005, 27.

<sup>4</sup> Michiaki Kawato: *Grimm dowo no hakken* (A Discovery of the Grimms' Fairy Tales). eds. Michiaki Kawato/Yoshiko Noguchi/Takanori Sakakibara. In: *Nihon ni okeru Grimm dowo honyaku shoshi* (Bibliography of the Grimms' Fairy Tales in Japan). Nada Shuppan center 2000, 11.

<sup>5</sup> First edition used abroad: *Swinton's Third Reader*. New York/Chicago 1882, 45–47.

Instead, Sargent briefly noted “from Grimm of Germany”. The following is a summary of *The Horse-Shoe Nail* in its original German form:

A merchant had done good business at the fair. All his wares had been sold and his money bag was very heavy. He rode his horse in a hurry. Even though he knew that a nail had fallen out of one of the horse-shoes, he did not replace the nail. At last, the horse fell and broke one of his legs. The merchant was obliged to leave his horse lying on the road and make his way home on foot carrying the heavy bag on his shoulder. It was the cursed nail that caused all his misfortune: haste makes waste.

The hero in Sargent’s text is not a merchant but a farmer. So he did not sell wares but his corn. Merchant was not very common as a social status at that time in Japan, so this change was made perhaps by the author Sargent, and not the English translator. The proverb ‘Haste makes waste’ (Eile mit Weile) was omitted, altering the original intent of the story.

It was changed in another English textbook, *Union Reader Number 3* by Charles W. Sanders (1805–89), to the following proverbial rhyme:

“For want of a nail the shoe was lost;  
For want of a shoe the horse was lost;  
For want of the horse the man got lost;  
And all, for want of a horse-shoe nail.”<sup>6</sup>

This rhyme was made famous in the United States and England through Benjamin Franklin’s *The Way to Wealth* (1758). Franklin cited the rhyme from *Rider’s British Merlin* which was one of the earliest almanacs, published from 1656 until at least 1830<sup>7</sup>. The rhyme contains an important moral and was rather well-known in the West. The English clergyman Thomas Adams (1583–1653) said in one of his *Sermons* (collected in 1629) that the French have a military proverb: “The loss of a nail, the loss of an army”, and continued: “The want of a nail loseth the shoe, the loss of a shoe troubles the horse, the horse endangereth the rider, the rider breaking his rank molests the company as far as to hazard the whole army”<sup>8</sup>. This proverb of military origin was also introduced in *Outlandish Proverbs* (1640) by George Herbert (1593–1633), in *English Proverbs* (1670) by John Ray (1627–1705) and other collectors<sup>9</sup>. It was popular in France, Spain, and Greece, too<sup>10</sup>. The meaning is that a minor neglect may breed a lot of trouble and careless persons

<sup>6</sup> Sanders, Charles W.: Sanders’ Union Readers 3. New York 1871, 27.

<sup>7</sup> Franklin, Benjamin: Poor Richard’s Almanacks [1758]. Philadelphia 1976, 280.

<sup>8</sup> The Oxford Dictionary of Nursery Rhymes. eds. Iona and Peter Opie. Oxford 1951, 324.

<sup>9</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>10</sup> *ibid.*

may be killed by enemies. Because of its military connotations, the proverb was “kept on the wall of Anglo-American Supply Headquarters in London during the Second World War”<sup>11</sup>.

According to Benjamin Franklin, “Want of Care does us more Damage than Want of Knowledge”<sup>12</sup>. If we neglect the care of a machine at the factory, we will fail in business and lose money. This proverb contains the most important moral advocated by the Japanese government at that time. Their policy of westernization under the motto “Fukoku Kyouhei” (Rich country, strong army) aimed at avoiding colonialization by western countries while importing western expertise and morals in order to support their political goals. This proverb taught the Japanese people what the Japanese government wanted to learn from the West. Therefore *The Horse-Shoe Nail* was an ideal teaching device during the Meiji era (1868–1912). This is the reason why this story was the first to be introduced in Japan, even though it is currently not one of the more famous Grimm tales.

## 1.2. *Hans in Luck* (KHM 83) in *Chambers’ Standard Reading Books 2*

Although the Chambers brothers (William 1800–32, Robert 1802–71) did not cite the source of this Grimm tale in the English version, I have recently discovered its origin: *German Popular Stories and Fairy Tales, as told by Gammer Grethel* (1837) translated by Edgar Taylor (1793–1839)<sup>13</sup>. This English version was translated from the second edition of the German original (1819)<sup>14</sup>, but had been drastically revised by Taylor. From this changed text, the Chambers brothers reprinted *Hans in Luck* in their textbook. There are five particularly notable changes:

### 1.2.1. A new poem was inserted into the text:

The Chambers brothers adopted the following poem that Taylor had inserted into the text:

“No care and no sorrow,  
A fig for the morrow!  
We’ll laugh and be merry,  
Sing heigh down derry!”<sup>15</sup>

<sup>11</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>12</sup> Franklin (above, note 7) 280.

<sup>13</sup> *German Popular Stories and Fairy Tales, as told by Gammer Grethel*. From the collection of M.M. Grimm. Revised translation by Edgar Taylor. London 1837.

<sup>14</sup> *Kinder- und Haus-Märchen 1. Gesammelt durch die Brüder Grimm. Zweite verm. und verb. Auflage*. Berlin 1819.

<sup>15</sup> *German Popular Stories and Fairy Tales* (above, note 13) 130.

Because there was no such poem in the German original, the Chambers brothers must have used the Taylor book of Gammer Gretel.

#### 1.2.2. The master gives Hans a lump of silver, not of gold

The change is due to the economic situation in England, where the gold standard system had been adopted in 1816. The stock of gold in the Bank of England had dramatically decreased by 1837<sup>16</sup>. However, the Central Bank needed enough gold to gain the trust of the people to be able to change their money into gold, whenever they wanted<sup>17</sup>. Any wasteful behaviour of individuals with relation to gold was to be avoided. However, the hero of this story wastes a lump of gold as big as his head through foolish exchanges. Therefore, the translator – Taylor – replaced gold by silver to avoid any publishing obstacles in 1837<sup>18</sup>.

#### 1.2.3. Instead of a farmer, a shepherd appears

The person who exchanges a cow against Hans' horse is not a farmer, but a shepherd. The wool cut by the shepherd was the symbol of the English Industrial Revolution. Because the government promoted the wool industry since the sixteenth century, wool was in great demand. Wool prices had risen remarkably, and many landowners dismissed the tenant farmers in order to change farmland into grazing lands. Many farmers went to the big cities and became labourers. This caused an inflation of agricultural products<sup>19</sup>. A negative image of farmers was avoided to keep enough workers on the farms. Therefore, the English translator in all probability changed the word 'farmer' into 'shepherd'.

#### 1.2.4. The pig thief is thrown into a horse pond, not in jail

Severe punishment was to be avoided according to the morals of Victorian times (1837–1901). Throwing someone in a horse pond sounds humorous and not draconic.

#### 1.2.5. Avoiding the word 'God' as a result of the Blasphemy Act<sup>20</sup>.

<sup>16</sup> Akiko Minemoto: 1884 nen no beer johrei no kigen to tsuka shugi (The Beginning of the Beer Act of 1884 and the Money Doctrine). In: Bulletin of Seijo University Junior College 71 (1976) 79.

<sup>17</sup> Masahiro Sekioka: Money bunmei no keizaigaku (The Economy of the Money Culture). Tokyo: Daimond sha 1996, 117.

<sup>18</sup> Kenjiro Hirayama: Kahei suryo setsu no rekishiteki hatten (A Historical Development of the Money Quantity Theory). Kwansei Gakuin University Journal of Economics 58,2 (Sept. 2004) 43.

<sup>19</sup> Hilton Boyd: A Mad, Bad, and Dangerous People? England 1783–1846. Oxford 2011, 8f.

<sup>20</sup> Sutton, Martin: The Sin-Complex. Kassel 1996, 315.

This act had been invoked on a number of occasions in order to prosecute persons who had used God's name in vain<sup>21</sup>. For this reason, Taylor replaced the word 'God' by 'heaven'. Many changes to the story are due to the Victorian sense of values.

### 1.3. *The Fox and the Cat* (KHM 75) in Swinton's *Third Reader*

The title *The Fox and the Cat* was changed by William Swinton (1833–92) into "One Trick that was Worth a Hundred"<sup>22</sup>. The following is a summary of *The Fox and the Cat* in its original form:

The fox tells the cat boastfully about his hundred tricks to outwit an enemy. The cat envies him because it has only one trick, which is to climb the tree when the enemy comes. The fox looks down on the cat. At this moment, they hear the sound of a horn and a pack of hounds comes barking. The cat runs up a high tree to protect itself from the hounds. The fox, which knows a hundred tricks, cannot use them and is caught by the hounds. "Now could you have climbed up a tree like me, your life would not have been sacrificed."<sup>23</sup>

Swinton changed the last sentence as follows: "I see that one good trick is worth more than ten times ten poor ones."<sup>24</sup> Because he focused on the cat's method of survival, not on the killing of the fox, this sentence was more suitable for the policy of "Fukoku Kyouhei" (Rich country, strong army) of the Japanese government. This textbook taught the Japanese students that what was needed was only one good trick, not one hundred poor ones, to defeat the enemy.

## 2. The first Japanese translation of Grimms' Fairy Tales in book form (1887)

The first Japanese version of Grimms' Fairy Tales is *Seiyo koji Shinshen Sowa* (Old Western Gods and Hermit Stories)<sup>25</sup>. It was translated by Ryoho Suga (1857–1936)<sup>26</sup> in 1887 and contains eleven stories from the Grimms' Fairy Tales: *The*

<sup>21</sup> *ibid.*, 34; Thomas, Donald: *A Long Time Burning. The History of Literary Censorship in England*. London 1969, 67f.

<sup>22</sup> Swinton's *Third Reader* (above, note 5) 45.

<sup>23</sup> *Kinder- und Haus-Märchen* 1. ed. Hans-Jörg Uther. München 1996, 391.

<sup>24</sup> Swinton's *Third Reader* (above, note 5) 47.

<sup>25</sup> Ryoho Suga: *Seiyo koji shinshen sowa* (Old Western Gods and Hermit Stories). Tokyo: Shuseisha 1887.

<sup>26</sup> The translator spelled his name as Suge, but "the real name of the family is Suga", wrote Horyu Suga, one of his grandchildren, in the letter to me on May 16, 1999. He also appears under

*Golden Bird* (KHM 57), *Brother Frohlick's Adventure* (KHM 62), *The Industrious Mannikins* (KHM 39-I), *Faithful John* (KHM 6), *The Dancing-shoes* (KHM 133), *The Twelve Brothers* (KHM 9), *The Queen Bee* (KHM 62), *The Maiden's Visit* (KHM 39-II), *The Three Golden Hairs* (KHM 29), *The Lion's Castle* (KHM 88) and *Cinderella* (KHM 21).

The translator, Suga, had been studying at Oxford University for seven years at the time of his translation<sup>27</sup>. He was a Buddhist priest, teacher, journalist and established a newspaper publishing company, and once became a member of the House of Representatives<sup>28</sup>. He did not translate from the German original, but from the English translation, which has been unknown for a long time. I recently have discovered the English translation used by Suga in the British Library: It is the *Grimm's Fairy Tales*, translated by H.B. Paull<sup>29</sup>.

### 3. *Grimm's Fairy Tales*, translated by H.B. Paull

Paull's translation is not a complete version, a selection that contains only 128 of the total 211 Grimms' Fairy Tales. The original it draws on is the final version of Grimms' Tales, published in London in 1872<sup>30</sup>. In this translation, five types of changes appear:

#### 3.1. Names of religious entities, such as God, saints and the devil, are avoided

The German expression, "Gott sei gelobt" is translated into "Heaven be praised". The word 'God' is avoided here. Not only the term 'God' but also the names of other religious entities are totally avoided. St. Peter, for instance, becomes a fairy in the English version, which is again changed into a beggar or Peter in the Japanese version. "The most holy Trinity" is transformed into a few strange words in

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the name 'Suga' in many reliable literary sources, such as the Diet Membership List, the List of the Graduates of Keio University, Personal Reference Library, and the Dictionary of Japanese Modern Literature, etc.

27 Yojiro Ito: *Kokkai giin hyakusyu* (Hundred Haiku of the Dietmen). Tokyo: Seikando 1891, 11.

28 Yoshiko Noguchi: *Grimm no Meruchen. Sono yume to genjitsu* (Grimm's Fairy Tales. Their Dreams and Reality). Tokyo: Keiso shobo 1994, 114–119.

29 *Grimm's Fairy Tales*. Trans. H.B. Paull. London 1872.

30 Yoshiko Noguchi: *Eiyakuhon kara juhyaku sareta Nihon no Grimm dowo* (Japanese Translations of Grimms' Fairy Tales Influenced by English Translations) (*Jido bungaku honyaku saku-hin souran* 4). Tokyo: Nada shuppan Center 2005, 470.

English and then into a curse in the Japanese version. The devil appears as a demon in English and then as a monster or ogre in Japanese. Again, as mentioned before, the reasons for these changes are related to the Blasphemy Act.

### 3.2. Sexual expressions are avoided

In the original *Faithful John*, John “sucked three drops of blood from her right breast and spat them out”. In the English version, however, “He drew three drops of blood from her right shoulder and spat it out.” This change is due to the Victorian desire to avoid sexual references. Following this modification, acupuncture is added into the Japanese version: John “stuck the needles in her shoulder”. John’s action has lost all sexual connotations and has become a medical treatment.

In *The Lion’s Castle* (KHM 88: *The Singing, Springing Lark*) the girl asks the bride to let her sleep one night in the bridegroom’s room. In the English version, the girl only asks to speak to him alone in his bedroom. This modification is adopted by the Japanese version.

The wedding age of the hero in *The Three Golden Hairs* (KHM 29) is changed from 14 to 19 years, as it was not suitable for a boy to marry at the age of 14 at the time of Victoria. Therefore, the marriage age was changed to 19 years. This change of age also appears in Suga’s Japanese version.

### 3.3. Inappropriate expressions referring to the royal family or to fathers are avoided

The older son of the king in *The Golden Bird* neglects the advice of the fox and shoots at him in the original version. In the English version, however, the older son muses, “Why should I listen to the advice of an ignorant animal, however cunning he may be?”, after which he follows the fox. As a member of the king’s family, the prince is depicted as a sensible character, even if he is an adversary of the hero. This change appears in the Japanese version as well.

Cinderella’s father is, in the original German, a cruel individual. With an axe he chops down the pigeon house, into which Cinderella had escaped. This episode is changed in the English version. The stepmother, not the father, thinks that the lady who had entered the pigeon house could be Cinderella and therefore advises the prince to send workmen in order to pull down the pigeon house. The cruel act is thus transferred from the father to the stepmother. When the prince asks the father if he has any other daughters, the father answers, “None, except



little Cinderella, my dead wife's daughter, who's deformed, but she couldn't possibly be your bride." The adjective 'deformed', applied to his own daughter, is omitted in the English version because it was not suitable to use it with respect to a family member in the Victorian time. In the Japanese version, the episode of chopping down the pigeon house is omitted and no cruel father appears. There is only a kind and just father who allows Cinderella to put on the shoe. The stepmother therefore becomes the cruelest person in the story of Cinderella.

In *The Twelve Brothers* (KHM 9), the evil stepmother's character is changed into a bad witch. If the queen is a stepmother, she is changed into a witch in the other stories of the English version. This change made it easy to explain why the person in the highest position could be so hard-hearted. Being a witch sounds far less human than being a stepmother. In the Japanese version, there is no stepmother and no witch. Instead, a mother-in-law appears. The mother-in-law changes her attitude and accepts the queen kindly as soon as she learns that the young queen comes from a royal family. The mother-in-law has harassed the young queen only because she was against the marriage with a person from a lower social class.

### **3.4. Expressions implying violence or murder are avoided**

The twelve brothers are murdered by one word uttered by their sister in the original story, but in the English version, the brothers just die at her word, so that neither murder nor violence are evoked. In the Japanese version this is expressed even more euphemistically. If a person says one word, something serious will occur. The act of murder was thus changed into the more natural act of dying in the English version, while the Japanese version evokes an accident.

### **3.5. Presenting idealized images of men and women, according to predominant concepts of gender**

The third and youngest brother in the original version of *The Golden Bird* (KHM 57) is good-natured. In the English version, however, he is presented as a brave youth. In contrast, the description of women in the English version emphasizes their weakness. In the original version, the father in *The Lion's Castle* (KHM 88) promises his daughter to the Lion, and informs her of the decision. The youngest daughter accepts: "Then she took leave of him and walked confidently into the forest." In the English version, "She got ready to leave home, and after a sorrow-

ful farewell, took her way to the wood with great confidence.” The words ‘a sorrowful farewell’ are added, although the daughter is a brave woman. These changes were made by the translator Paull to reinforce stereotypes contrasting ‘strong men’ with ‘weak women’, a notion in line with Victorian vales. Paull purposefully inserted these changes in order to conform the stories to the moral and educational values of their purchasers: the Victorian bourgeoisie.

### Conclusions

Grimms’ Fairy Tales were first introduced in Japan through English textbooks used at schools. Three stories (KHM 184, 83, 75), which are not very famous, were included in the textbooks. They contain good proverbs or morals, important to the Japanese government during the Meiji era (1868–1912). The Japanese government carried out a policy of westernization under the motto “Fukoku Kyouhei” (Rich country, strong army), to avoid being colonized by western countries. The editors of the English textbooks took up the stories from the Grimms’ Fairy Tales to teach western morals. A military moral was introduced with *The Nail* (KHM 184) and *The Fox and The Cat* (KHM 75), while a critique of materialistic thinking was introduced with *Hans in Luck* (KHM 83), which was changed in the English version in line with Victorian values.

Both the Industrial Revolution and railway networks drastically changed the signification of family life. People could commute to factories by train, displacing the location of their working place. The purpose of the family unit which had served to provide labour as well as structure to the lives of its members, became solely living together. In other words, the family which had been a place of production became a place of consumption. In addition, a gender-specific division of labour within the family became firmly established<sup>31</sup>. The husband was to work outside the family, while the wife was to take care of the household. This new type of family – the ‘modern’ family – was introduced during the Victorian era. This modern middle-class family was propagated to the other social classes by means of school education and mass media. Modern masculinity and femininity were therefore born at the time of Victoria.

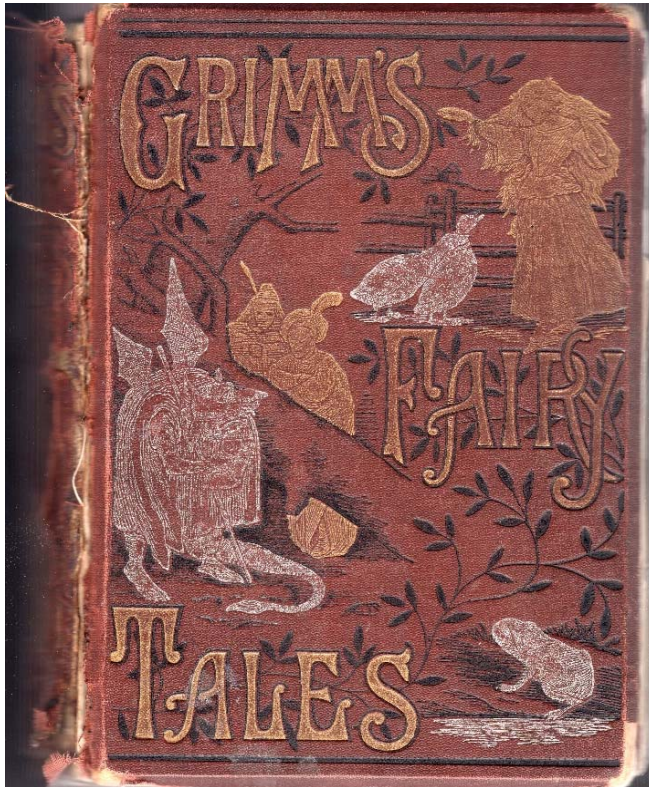
Changes in the English version of the Grimms’ Fairy Tales by Paull intended to reinforce the notion that a girl should necessarily become a good housewife. These modifications presented and perpetuated idealized images of men and

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<sup>31</sup> Shinichi Nagashima: *Seikimatsu madeno Daiei teikoku* (Great Britain until the End of the Century). Tokyo: Hosei University Press 1987, 248f.

women, avoided sexual language and references, shunned violence, and eluded inappropriate images of the royal family and of fathers. The patriarchal family system where the father is the chief representative was an important component of society.

The Japanese versions of Grimms' Fairy Tales adopted these Victorian values, as they drew upon English translations. Victorian culture, thought, and values were imported in Japan through the Grimms' Fairy Tales. They had – and continue to have – great influence upon views of morality and gender in Japan. Changes in the first Japanese translations were therefore largely affected by these English translations. By introducing European (in this case German) culture through the filter of English translations, lasting influences from English culture and society were unavoidable. I suppose that the same would be the case in any other non-English speaking country.



*Grimm's Fairy Tales*, by Mrs. H.B. Paull. London: Frederick Warne & Co. 1872.



Front cover of *Seiyō Kōji Shinsen Sōwa*, by Ryoko Suga. Tokyo: Shusei sha 1887.